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# **Social Justice and Citizenship in Scottish Education**

**Which policy levers are likely to promote change?**

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# Understanding social justice & citizenship



- Multiple dimensions of social justice: encompasses fairness in distribution of economic goods, social recognition and participation in key social institutions.
- Social justice pre-requisite of active citizenship– its absence leads to lack of trust, co-operation and cohesion.
- Government recognises that education is a key social institution shaping life chances and patterns of social participation.
- How well is Scottish education doing in terms of contributing to a socially just and participative society?

# Scottish policy on promoting social justice through education: schools

- Focus on school attainment relatively recent – Scotland is in middle range of OECD countries in terms of overall attainment and levels of social inequality.
- However, results of PISA 2015 caused consternation - Scotland overtaken by a number of countries, including England.
- Scottish Attainment Challenge focused on narrowing attainment gap - £750 Attainment Fund focused on schools in areas of social deprivation.
- However, lack of clarity about focus – pupil level attainment data still not available in Scotland to track progress.
- Ambivalence on use of standardised tests & publication of data.



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# School attainment outcomes: home nation comparisons



Measure	Source	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
% pupils with 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent	GCSE exams or equivalent, 2010/11	80.5	67.3	78.8	75.3
%17-18 year olds in school/FE/HE	Labour Force Survey	72		60	
% 17-24 year olds with no qualifications	Labour Force Survey, 2009	7.0	7.8	7.4	12.7
% 18 year olds with 2+ A-levels or equivalent	A-level results, 2011/12; Higher results 2011/12	51.8	27.1	36.8	50.2



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# School attainment: strongly associated with social background



## Pupils achieving 3 or more As at Higher in one sitting by SIMD quintile, 2011

		Poorest 20%	20% – 40%	40% – 60%	60% – 80%	Richest 20%
<b>Scotland</b>	Number	220	415	784	1220	1771
	%	2.5	4.8	8.2	12.2	17.4
<b>Dundee City</b>	Number	5	*	*	17	41
	%	1.4	*	17	8.1	21.7



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# Scottish policies on promoting social justice: higher education



- Free undergraduate tuition cornerstone of government policy. Assumed that participation in HE would reflect ‘the ability to learn rather than the ability to pay’ (unlike England).
- However, some perverse consequences – see later.
- Greater focus on widening access in England, partly because of political anxiety over impact of raising tuition fees.
- Until recently, very loose regulation of HE access in Scotland – but now placed on a statutory basis with Fair Access Commissioner.
- Institutional hierarchies have survived and intensified.



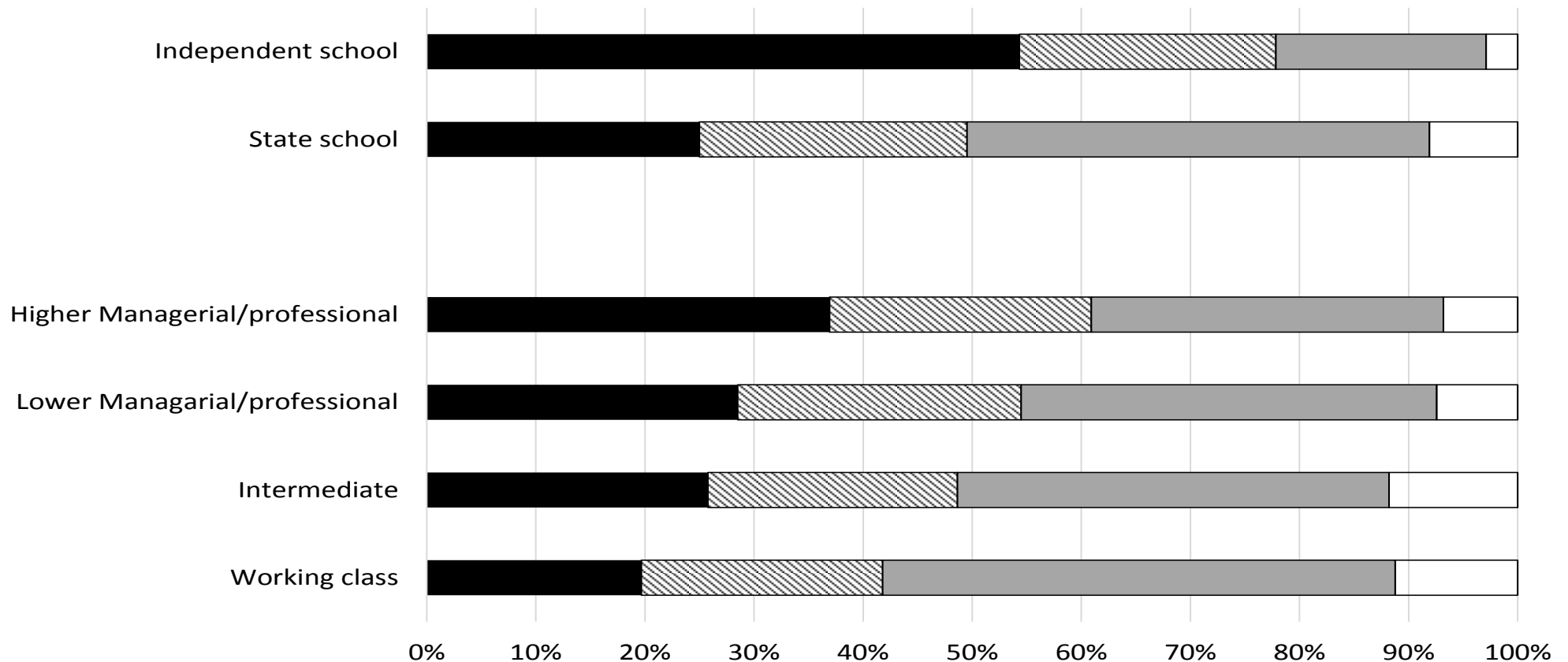
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# Patterns of HE participation: strongly associated with social background



Higher Education Institutions attended by student background: young Scottish-domiciled students entering HEIs in Scotland (Source: HESA record 2012/13)

■ Ancient    ▨ Other pre-92    ▩ Post-92    □ Other HEI



# Outcomes: HE participation rates

- Scotland has a lower proportion of 18 year olds going straight from school to university (23%) compared with Wales (26%), England (30%) and Northern Ireland(32%).
- 18 year olds from richest neighbourhoods in Scotland are four times as likely to go straight from school to university as those from the poorest neighbourhoods, compared with 2.4 times as likely in England.
- Abolition of graduate endowment in 2007 did not have an effect on the application, acceptance or entry rates of Scottish 18 year olds compared with observable patterns in other countries.
- Very expensive policy – SG has to cap places for Scottish and EU students – places for rUK and international students uncapped and growing.
- Number of places available has not kept pace with rising demand – to detriment of least advantaged.





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# Widening access and the expansion of the college sector – pros and cons



- HEIPR in Scotland is higher than in the rest of the UK because it includes those on HN programmes in college as well as those on degree programmes in university.
- Compared with students from most deprived backgrounds, those from least deprived backgrounds are three times as likely to go to university than college.
- 90% of the overall growth in HEIPR for the most disadvantaged in Scotland has been due to increased entry into college level higher education.
- Up-side – colleges may offer familiar environment in home communities – and much cheaper for government.



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# Are HN programmes in college equivalent to degree programmes in university?



- Only 40% of those embarking on HN programme progresses to university degree programmes - only half of these get full credit.
- Articulating students have higher drop-out rates – college and university courses don't always mesh.
- Students articulating with full credit generally go to post-92 universities – limiting access to professions e.g. Law, Medicine and Education.
- Students articulating to older universities generally have to repeat one or more years, so that an honours degree may take six years.
- No Scottish research on lifetime earnings of those with HN rather than degree level qualifications – but BIS research suggests that those with HN qualifications earn significantly less than those with degrees.
- College students like to be taught by staff with lower qualifications.



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# Regulation of widening access



- Outcome agreements have focused attention on policy priorities – including widening access.
- However, they have tended to become ‘producer captured’ documents – difficult to compare and interpret by students and the wider public.
- Indicate much widening access activity in universities, but little analysis of effectiveness.
- Contextualised admissions policies widely endorsed, but make relatively modest adjustments for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Universities support broad principles of widening access, but experience multiple pressures and seek to protect autonomy.



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# Resource Distribution



- Tackling educational disadvantage requires major resource redistribution.
- Free tuition policy means that universities capture lion's share of educational resources In 2012-13, £1 billion allocated to university teaching, c.f. £300 million allocated to colleges and £450 million to pre-school.
- Between 2010/11 and 2012/13, school funding fell by 5% in real terms whilst university funding was maintained.
- LAs in Scotland tend to spread resources evenly - only 5% of LA funding targeted at pupils experiencing social disadvantage.



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# Which policy levers might make a difference in Scottish schools?



- In some parts of England, overall attainment enhanced & inequality reduced by (i) targeting resources on children from poorer backgrounds irrespective of school attended (pupil premium), (ii) working closely with schools to ensure awareness of most effective teaching methods, and (iii) close monitoring using attainment data
- London Challenge regarded as particularly successful initiative – has worked with ‘ethnic capital’ (in contrast with some other European countries).
- Emphasis on core academic subjects.
- In Scotland, need for much better pupil level data to compare outcomes of schools with similar intakes.
- Need to ensure that children from poorer backgrounds have access to high status knowledge – some problems with Curriculum for Excellence.



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# Which policy levers might make a difference in higher education?



- Targeted places for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In 2013-14, SFC allocated 727 undergraduate places for widening access to most selective universities, and 1,020 undergraduate articulation places across 14 universities. Students in receipt of these places not in competition with others from more advantaged backgrounds - but future of the scheme is uncertain
- Administrative changes – e.g. inclusion of UTT within UCAS from 2015 onwards made a measurable difference to inclusion of students from less advantaged backgrounds – most UTT in Scotland takes place in ancient/pre-92 universities and boosted widening access figures.
- In England, uncapping of student numbers has widened participation – but some negative consequences.



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# The future



- In context of ongoing austerity, Scottish Government cap on university places means that there is a gap between increasing demand and relatively static supply of places – direct consequence of free tuition policy.
- Also restricts funding available to improve attainment of school pupils in poorer areas, who are much less likely to take ‘facilitating’ subjects.
- Within competition for university places, students from poorer backgrounds lose out – universities inevitably recruit those with higher qualifications.
- Widening access flourishes when system is expanding – this remains central challenge.